

REMARKS

Claims 10, 14-16, 20, and 23-25 are now in the application. By this Amendment, claims 10 and 14-16 have been amended and claim 25 has been added. Claims 9, 11-13, 17-19, 21, and 22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for claim 25 is found at least at original claims 9, 11, and 12. No new matter has been added.

Entry of the amendments is respectfully requested because entrance of the claims will simplify the issues on appeal should an appeal be necessary.

Claims 9-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,051,469 to Boschi.

Claim 25 recites, among other features, a base including an annular recess. At least this feature cannot reasonably be considered to be suggested by Boschi.

The Office Action asserts, with respect to original claim 12, that Boschi suggests, in Fig. 1-4, features corresponding to the above-quoted claim feature. However, the Office Action does not specify which particular feature is considered to correspond to an annular recess as claimed. Applicant respectfully submits that such a feature is not disclosed in Boschi. For example, feature 27 depicted in Fig. 4 of Boschi is not an annular groove throughout lower face 27. Instead, Boschi states, at col. 2, lines 33-37, that a series of twenty-four alveoli are present, which are separated by radial ribs 32. Thus, Boschi suggests isolated alveoli but no annular groove.

In addition, Boschi teaches away from the above claim feature because Boschi suggests, at col. 2, lines 61-64, that a load acting between the spring and the plate is localized prevalingly on rib 30 and radial rib 32 without annulling the alveoli 27 and 28. The alveoli act as hermetically closed air chambers, see col. 2, line 44, that absorb vibrations by mutual extinction of the wave fronts of these vibrations. However, the washer does not provide a "significant variation in stiffness," as claimed in claim 25 because the alveoli are not located between the two load transmitting surfaces 22 and 25, and, thus, do not deform under load.

Further, the Office Action asserts, at page 4, lines 2-6, that the rubber washer 21 of Boschi can reasonably be considered to correspond to an elastically deformable bushing of variable stiffness, as recited in independent claim 25 because the more rubber becomes compressed the stiffer it becomes. This assertion is incorrect. Applicant's disclosure sets forth, at paragraph [0004], that simple coil springs have a constant stiffness, i.e., have a constant value for a given spring that is independent of the applied force. By contrast, the elastically deformable bushing recited in claim 25 has a variable stiffness, which cannot be described by a constant value. As can be seen in Fig. 5 of Applicant's disclosure, a bushing as claimed has a variable stiffness resulting from i) the deformation of the annular recess, and ii) the stiffness of the bushing material compressed between spring 13 and support 14. The washer of Boschi has only the constant stiffness of the load-transmitting rubber of rib 30 and radial rib 32.

Claims 10, 14-16, 20, and 23-24 are in condition for allowance for at least their respective dependence on an allowable independent claim 25, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Amendment dated January 27, 2009
After Final Office Action of October 27, 2008

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Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 22193-00024-US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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